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881 to pronounce the formulae or to sing the songs of the sungi. Don't reveal a word of them to anybody ; if a boy does so he will be strangled! " etc.

That same day the women bring porridge with sauce flavourings and the shepherds are no longer allowed to use insulting words when they receive the pots from their hands.

IV. *The Chameleon procession.*

553 881 All these are evidently aggregation rites. But the greatest of all is the procession of the initiated into the capital of the chief which takes place on the day of the closing of the sungi and on the following day. Covered with ochre, marching on mats which have been spread on the ground so that they do not touch the dust with their feet, they advance slowly, bowed to the ground, stretching out first one leg and then the other, with a sudden brisk motion, trying to imitate the gait of the chameleon, the wise, the prudent. They are men who think, and no longer boys without intelligence! Then they all sit in the central place of the capital, silent, with their heads still bent, and the sisters and mothers who have come from all the different villages must go and recognize them. Each woman brings with her a bracelet or a shilling or any small present and searches for her boy amongst the throng. When she thinks she has found him, she kisses him on the cheek and gives him the present. The boys have two sticks in their hands. One stick bears some short lateral branches on which the boys will hang the bracelets (busenga). The other is smaller and, when the mother has discovered her son and has kissed him, he strikes her, a soft blow if it is his mother or his grandmother, a much harder one if it is his sister, and utters the new name which he has chosen.

In answer to this demonstration, the mother begins to dance and to sing the praises of her son! This is the typical aggregation rite called *kunga*, the breaking of silence, which we shall meet with more than once in the passage rites of the tribe. These bracelets are all given in to the chief, who will distribute them amongst the old women. It would be taboo to give them to childbearing women. According to the same idea the fees paid by the boys to

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178 554 his chief : " What shall I eat ? Will you feed me ? Must I not carry burdens on my head ? I do not know what to do with the ngiyana. " — " Tiko dji bolile, " say the old people shaking their heads, " A ke he na nao," that is to say : " The country is falling into decay, going to the dogs. There is no longer any law... " Oh! the good old times!

F. OLD AGE

888 The man however grows older, older. His hair and his beard turn white, the wrinkles deepen on his face. He stoops. His skin no longer shines with health and corpulence. His wives die and his glory fades. His crown loses the lustre of bygone times. If a branch scratches it, if a knock spoils it, he has not a shilling to pay the repairer! He is forsaken. He is less respected and often only a burden unwillingly supported. The children laugh at him. If the cook sends them to carry to the lonely grandfather his share of food in his leaky old hut, the young rascals are capable of eating it on the way and of depriving the old man of his meal, afterwards pretending that they have done what they were told! And when, between two huts, under shelter of the hedge of reeds, he warms his round-shouldered back in the rays of the setting sun, huddled there, quite weighed down by his years, lost in some senile dream, they point to the decrepit form and say to each other : " He! Shikhunkununu! " — " It is the bogey-man, the ogre! "

People of mature age show scarcely more consideration for old people than do the young ones. Lately in the district of Matjolo, an old man and an old woman, Kobole and Minyokwana, were forsaken by their children, who were moving to another part of the country. They were left in a miserable shed, merely a roof supported by some poles without any reeds to close in the wall. Some compassionate souls took pity on this poor wretched couple, who had fallen into second childhood and did not even know what they were saying.

888 In time of war, old people die in great numbers. During moments of panic, they are hidden in the wood, in the palm-tree swamps, while all the able-bodied population run away. They are killed by the enemy, who spares no one (it is the law of war), or they die in their hiding-places of misery and hunger!

As may be seen, the eve of life is very sad for the poor Thonga. There are however children who, to the end, show much devotion to their parents. The most to be pitied are those who fall to the charge of remote nephews or cousins. They can only repeat in a broken voice the sad refrain : " Ba hi shanisa! " — " They treat us very badly! "

G. DEATH

I. *The last days.*

763 Manyibane, the headman of a big village near Rikatla, is 513 dangerously ill. The men of his kraal, his friends, have come 834 to inquire about the illness (kamba shinyonga) and have learned 761 that it is serious. They issue this order to all the inhabitants : " Tlulan psilawen! " — " Keep each of you in his sleeping place, (viz. the men to the right of the hut, the women to the left) and have no more relations. It is taboo! The man would die! " Should visitors come, they are not allowed to enter the village. They must have kept " pure " for two days at least. Two sticks are planted on either side of the door of the hut, and a third is put over them so as to close the entrance. " It is the way black people have of making their proclamation, " says Mboza. " Everybody will know that a dying man is there and nobody will come in. " Should another man of the village have had relations with the same woman as the patient, he is doubly prohibited from seeing him, because the patient would break out into perspiration and die immediately. This is the great law of *matlulana*, as we shall see.

754 Of course the *ñanga* (doctor) has been called already. He

854 (see page 48.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a
862 gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk ; when her mother sends her on an errand she is able to do it. She also begins to talk, and to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she may eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home.

857 "When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with
868 the shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back, she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood ; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles.

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It may however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies,
583 neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are
462 grown up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer ; she prepares the light beer ; she smears the floor of her hut ; this is what she does till she is quite old.

888 "When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grandchildren are

1 [The following page is quoted from an essay by a native girl at the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques -- Analyst]

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888 sent to bring her food. When they are hungry, they stop on the way and eat it themselves. On their return they say: 'We have indeed given it to her.' In the morning they put a stick in her hand and help her to get out of her hut, so that she can warm herself in the sun.

"Then when the Ronga woman is quite old she begins to see no more and to hear no more. She falls into second childhood. All she does is to complain and to say, crying, that she is ill treated. And this is the end!"

The girl who wrote this essay was but emerging from childhood, and has consequently enlarged more especially upon the first phase of the life. The life of a woman is not very different from that of a man at that stage. Differences however come in later on, and we shall have to add some important facts relating to the fate of women before marriage, during the conjugal life, and in widowhood.

A. BEFORE MARRIAGE

I. *The Girls' games.*

857 524 [868] 864 As we have seen from the essay of the schoolgirl, Ronga girls imitate the doings of their mothers, their cooking, their gathering of fuel, etc., just as the boys imitate the fighting and hunting of the men. They also play with *dolls*, nursing them as they see the women nursing babies. These dolls are called *vule*. The origin of the game is as follows. A little girl asks her mother who is carrying a younger child on her shoulders: Mother, where did you find your baby? — Oh! I found it in the bush (ntlhaben). — Please bring me one also, mother. — All right!— Next day the mother plucks a sala in the bush, removes all the stones inside it, lets it dry and fixes it to the end of a stick. She pierces the upper part of the sphere, passes bits of string through the holes to imitate hair, smears them with ochre, ties a little clothing round

783 village itself, which must carry out the collective purification of
768 *hlamba ndjaka*.

I must further mention a new custom which is spreading
587 amongst the Ba-Ronga in the neighbourhood of Lourenço
609 Marques. When a widow objects to becoming the wife of the legal
611 inheritor, she goes home and adopts another husband. There are plenty of men of other tribes, coming from Inhambane, Quelimane, Mozambique, who have no wife. They accept the proposal of the widow and go to live in her village. They are generally despised and called by the insulting name of *mugomo*, a Zulu word meaning an empty iron oil-tin. They are as hard and unfeeling as such a tin! If children are born, they belong to the family of the deceased husband, who paid the lobolo.

587 Sometimes also a widow chooses a nephew who is still a child. She gives him food as if she were his wife, but she lives with another man whom she loves. It even happens that she may choose a girl, the daughter of another wife of the deceased. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

C. OLD AGE AND DEATH

888 An old woman, having in some sort gone out from the sexual
782 community, enjoys some privileges which are taboo for her sisters who are still capable of childbearing. She is allowed to put on the clothing of the widows ; contamination of death is not so dangerous for her. She can proceed to the purification of the village, in certain cases of epidemic, and of the weapons of the warriors in war time (Part III). After the sacrifice of the black ram for rain, old women and small girls alone are allowed to eat the flesh of the victim.

462 But old and decrepit women are despised. As long as they
888 can still till their land, they are treated with consideration, but when they have lost all their strength and must be fed by their children, they are looked upon as troublesome burdens. I must say that, as long as she still has an atom of vigour, a Thonga woman goes to her field and tills it. During all her life time

1[See pp. 518-519 in these categories as in ML—Analyst]

462 888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. Mahloko comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this : the parents of the woman say : "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died ; let us go to mourn her."

587 578 Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans.* If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying : "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

764 578 754 But though there may be no difficult lobola question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die ; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of mahloko, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched ? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks ; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

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601 611 tatana wa kokwana, father of grandfather, is never employed. The great-grandfather and the great-great-grandfather are sometimes designated as follows: he who does not see his grandson when he has been sent by the women to bring him food; the boy eats it on the way and the old man does not notice it! (Page 132). These progenitors call Tobane *ntukulu*, grandson. He is the true ntukulu of Shitsimbo; to Tobane I, he is the *ntukulu wa shikandjatjolo*, "the one who sits on the knees;" to Nkwangwana, the *ntukulu wo shikandjamirombo*, a word which seems to mean "the one who sits on the toes." In Djonga there is one more of these curious expressions applied to batukulu, *ntukulu wa shinguhe*. "When he pronounces that name," says Gana, "my great-grandfather points near by; when he says *ntukulu wa shikandjatjolo*, he points further down." To understand this properly, we must imagine the following patriarchal scene: a very, very old man is sitting on the ground, holding his son (ñwana) in his arms, and with his grandson (ntukulu) on his thigh, his great-grandson (wa shikandjatjolo) on his knees and his great-great-grandson on his toes (1). The fact that these terms have become almost obsolete shows that the system of counting descent from the father is at any rate very old in our tribe. There must even have been a time when the ancestors in the paternal line were better known than now. The wives of these bakokwana are also bakokwana, in the same way as their husbands.

601 604 The father's sister is *rarana* (Ro.) *hahane* (Dj.). The two words are the same, as *r* often changes into *h* in Thonga phonetics; the prefix of the first class, *mu* or *n*, now dropped, may have caused this change. Rarana approaches very closely to rara, father. It is employed in this form when it means *my* aunt. When we wish to say your aunt, his aunt, rarana becomes rarakati wa ku, rarakati

601 888 (1) There is another interpretation of these terms as applied to the grandparents: *kokwana wo shinguhe:* he is poor, miserable! When an ox is killed in the village, they do not even send him his share; he is far away. *Kokwana wa shikandjatjolo:* he is almost blind. When he wants to see his great-grandson he calls him and tells him: "Sit down on my knees." *Kokwana wa shikandja-mirombo:* mirombo or mitjombo means the small ears of mealies used to prepare the beer of the offerings. This kokwana, the great-great-grandfather, is already almost like one of the ancestor-gods to whom sacrifices are made!